Discussion

9.1 Introduction

A qualitative case study approach was employed in this study, based on a single company. Within the case, semi-structured interviews were adopted to achieve the study objectives and to answer the research questions (See Section 1.3; 1.5). The analysis of the data is presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. Within this chapter, findings relating to front-line employees, operational managers and senior managers are integrated with the salient literature. A number of key themes are extracted in relation to the study research questions which are;

Q1: How does organisational culture affect the implementation of internal marketing?

Q2: How do internal marketing practices affect organisational culture?

Q3: How do internal marketing practices affect internal aspects of the organisation?

Q4: How do internal marketing practices affect external practices of the organisation?

Q5: In what ways does internal marketing bridge the boundaries between marketing and HRM?

Table 9.1 reflects a summary of the main themes relating to the organisational culture and internal marketing within the company as seen by each of the respondent groups. This will help to show the relatively high level of consistency between the culture-related data as reported by the three respondent groups. This can be taken to reflect the strength of the culture which found across the branches. An important issue that can be raised here is the extent to which all respondents were primed to answer in a particular way?

This is unlikely as during the data collection stage, the researcher was presented to the respondent on spot without previous arrangement. Even branch managers were only informed about the topic of our discussion at the interview time.

Table 9.1 The "Fun Travel" Organisational Culture

Theme	Front-line staff view	Operational managers view	Senior managers view
Employee orientation culture	• Feel supported, valued, rewarded by the company all time. • Career development opportunities. • Friendly and relaxed work environment. • Feeling partner (equality).	• Staff are number one asset. • Looking after staff and valuing them and their opinions. • Keeping team happy all time. • Encouraging staff progression. • Team working as one equal team (mangers and staff are the same).	• Staff are number one asset. • Equality with all employees. • Support and Motivate front-line staff all time. • Involve teams' staff in decision making. • Gauging staff opinion. • Lots of benefits and policies for staff
Customer orientation culture	• Providing "best "customer service. • Gauging customer needs. • Adapting to the variety of customers. • Build rapport with customers. • Value each customer individually.	• Customers are the front end. • Providing "Good" customer service. • Going the extra mile for the customers • Value each customer as individual.	• Customers are important party. • Understanding the customers' needs. • Providing "best" customer service.

Management style	• Approachable management style with open communication. • Flat and transparent management style. • Involve employees in decision making and valuing their opinions. • Giving employees complete autonomy over their work • Encouraging interaction via social events.	• Leading by example. • Open door policy (transparency). • Constant communication with staff. • Giving employees autonomy with their customers • Equality with employees. • Involving employees in decision making. • Quick career development. • Rewarding the hard work.	• Flat structure (Equality culture) • Transparency and open communication with employees. • Egalitarianism. • Investing in Staff. • Work hard, play hard environment. • Delegating responsibility to each team (autonomy) • Involving employees in decision making.

9.2 Internal marketing and the organisational culture

From the data, it can be seen that the relationship between internal marketing and organisational culture is one of overlap. Both themes affect each other. Within the research, the organisational culture's components are customer orientation, employee orientation and managerial style or philosophy.

According to the study findings, Fun Travel's organisational culture can be described as family-oriented. The company demonstrates that it values its employees and shows concern for their well being, growth and development. There is evidence of a smooth internal operation with high cooperation and a team working system based on an effective flow of communication. This description matches Bellou's (2007) humanistic culture or Chan (1997) and Gounaris' (2008) notion of the clan culture. What is revealed from the interviews across the three groups (see Sections 6.2, 7.2, 8.2) supports what Koutroumanis and Alexakis (2009 p. 51) explored in relation to the clan type.

"This culture type boasts a family type of environment where the employees are an integral part of the organisation. It is more of a free flowing type of organisation, which has limited structure and informal lines of communication. Viewing the employees as part of an interconnected, extended family and addressing the needs and wants of the individuals creates a higher sense of loyalty".

At the same time, the company also adopts a market-oriented culture with a focus on customer needs (see Sections 6.2.2, 7.2.2, and 8.2.2). This type of culture revolves around understanding customers' needs, presenting the best possible customer service through developing and motivating front-line staff and evaluing the best suppliers as well as building long-term individual relationship with these customers. All these values seem to affect the internal marketing practices of the organisation. But, in turn, internal marketing practices also help to keep and sustain these values. Bellou (2007) found a positive correlation between all dimensions of organisational culture and the ability to serve customers and being customer-oriented as part of that culture. The two main cultures are revealed to affect the implementation of internal marketing practices. Internal marketing practices, within the data, seem to be used to sustain and confirm the cultural attributes. This will be displayed in next section according to each internal marketing practice.

Employee/employer branding

Within the findings, the corporate brand seems to be aligned with both employee and employer branding. As can be seen in Sections (6.3.1, 7.3.1 and 8.3.1) the way the corporate brand is internalized throughout the organisation is shown through front-line staff and managerial interpretation of the brand and how this should be reflected within the price they offer, the level of customer service they present as well as the level of qualifications and knowledge they have. Here branding not only plays an external role but an internal one by aligning the employees behind this brand. This idea aligns with that presented by Harris and de Chernatony (2001) by illustrating the role of employees as "ambassadors" to their brand due to their linking role between the internal and external environment of the organisation.

This also confirms what Foster et al (2010) state about understanding the corporate brand as a means of achieving an understanding of the culture of the organisation. The promise made to customers is carried internally and is lived by employees as basic values both emotionally and functionally (Frook, 2001; Czaplewski et al, 2001; Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Miles and Mangold, 2005). Human resource managers confirm that internal communications are designed to make sure that all organisational values are lived, day by day, and this creates an "unbeatable" workplace. This is what Harris and de Chernatony (2001 p. 453) imply when they elaborate on this concept and state that "To gain employees' commitment to a brand's identity it is important to establish staff communication programmes as employees need to know what is expected of them and how they can contribute to the brand's identity through their behaviour".

Reviewing Table 6.3 which summarizes the reasons to consider Fun Travel as an attractive workplace, employer branding seems to satisfy the employees within the company (the work environment, career development, financial and non-financial rewards and trust in the organisation). All of these promises are found as part of the employment campaigns by the organisation. For instance, on the Fun Travel's website (the career section), the entire range of employee benefits are illustrated in detail. This highlights the concurrence between the promise and the reality that satisfies employees and contributes to their commitment towards the organisation (see Sections 6.3.1, 7.3.1). Both Brandon (2005) and Foster et al (2010) stress the

importance of presenting the right employer brand which reflects the reality of the organisation and its' values in order to establish an appropriate psychological contract with new employees in order to provide a good employment experience.

In the case of Fun Travel, this ensures that many employees as well as people within the industry recommend the company as a workplace for others. Top managers consider this to be the most effective marketing tool for the organisation's employer brand. This leads to more satisfied and qualified recruits who tend to retain with the organisation longer than those who are recruited via different channels (Breaugh, 1992). By recommending the organisation to others, employees act as "advocates" of the organisation and this reflects a high level of commitment and trust in the organisation (Schweitzer and Lyons, 2008).

Various channels that are employed to promote the employer brand (Fun Travel careers websites, referrals, on line job boards, global internal careers sites, employment office campaign, print media, agencies on PSP) helps to reach as many employment markets as possible which results in a large volume of candidates to select from (One of the human resource management team suggested that the number reaches thirty five thousand applications). This is the first step towards successful internal marketing employer brands and recruitment (Pfeffer, 1998).

The recruitment process

The recruitment process within internal marketing practices focuses on the choice of the right employees (Kotler, 2006). As part of corporate brand management, organisations realize the importance of recruiting employees whose values fit with those of the organisation (Ind, 1998; Hatch and Schutz, 2003).

The findings of this study reveal that, within the recruitment process, considerable attention is paid to the selection of front-line employee who fit within the organisational culture (see Sections 6.3.2, 7.3.2, and 8.3.2). This especially relates to a focus on the personality that fits with serving customers; with the nature of work under a commission regime; with multi-tasking; working independently and taking decisions and the fit within the teamwork environment. Personality is evident as a predominant factor in selecting front -line staff. Secondly, personal travel experience which will help to deliver better customer service and high education levels to

acquire skills quickly and work independently are among the most important values of the organisation and are prized in new recruits.The recruitment process depends on measuring certain competencies .Competencies required are indicated for the job. These are based on changing business needs, organisational values and feedback from staff.

Branch managers are involved in the process as they are a source of information on business needs and can be aware of the kind of personality that is needed to complement their teams. According to company documentation, the process consists of five broad stages; starting with articulating the nature of the vacancies, after that short listing candidates from all recruitment channels to a number of tests for the personality and competences measuring areas such as phone screening, face to face interviews for measuring personality and competencies, psychometric test, reference checking, followed by a verbal job offer and ending with contracts and all other documentation. Within the findings, the interview stage is highlighted to be the most significant by both employees and managers. Through the interview each party is communicating key message(s) to the other party. The aim is to select the right person who fits the job within the organisation. From the findings, investing in the right people is seen to be best for the business. This is why higher education and travel experience are important second only to personality as the basis for a career as front-line staff. The results affirm literature discussion on the hiring and selection process as internal marketing practices (for example, Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Glassman and McAfee, 1992; Puth and Ewing, 1998; Pfeffer, 1998).

Within the findings, an important tool used within the recruitment process as an essential component of internal marketing practices is the provision to candidates of detailed information on the organisation, the nature of the job, company expectation as well as benefits. This builds trust as well as reflecting how the employees are perceived by the organisation as partners who have to share the reality of the workplace. This is the role of internal marketing within the recruitment process whereby it is important to deliver an accurate message about the organisation and it is culture (Foster et al, 2010). This is also referred to by Brandon (2005) as the "Recruitment Brand" which should be honest and not misrepresent the organisation to new employees. Failure to recognise this may lead to negative outcomes.

The training process

Recognition of the importance of the training process to implant organisational values in new staff minds, to improve specific skills needed and to anticipate any environmental change is found clearly within the literature (Taylor and Cosenza, 1997; Pfeffer, 1998; Czaplewski et al, 2001; Bansal et al, 2001).The findings of this study show that the training process within Fun Travel is seen as a continuous learning process. The process is divided into basic training and ongoing development. It is evident that the initial training process is an orientation and socialization process as well (see Section 6.3.3). All new front-line employees are accommodated in one place and learn about the company and how everything works. They are introduced to the team at head office. They learn the ways of the organisation. Skills and competencies are improved through this training. All front-line staff have to be skilful at using systems by the end of the training. Learning how to deal with customers and understand their needs is also an important training element. This is consistent with Papasolomou and Vrontis' (2006) results concerning the importance of training in developing staff competencies, improving customer service and sustaining organisational culture. Pfeffer (1998) also confirms the role of training in nourishing organisational values.

The company is focused on preparing employees to take a role in their branches. This is evident in number of procedures that are applied:

- Keeping employees completely free for the initial training to speed up the learning process after which the first three months are paid in full until they complete their learning;

- Specialized trainers are responsible for the intensive course ;

- Following up with front-line staff at branches until they are ready for all tasks (for example, trainers spend day with new front-line staff on the 9th and 19th week of their starting at branches) ;

- Co-workers are involved in helping their new colleagues and there is specific days for co-workers to undertake certain activities with the new colleague

- Evaluating the process through feedback from participants for more improvement;

- Evaluating the process through a number of booklets which have to be filled in by the employee alone or by the employee with their managers.
- Call recording/ daily performance monitoring to identify any weaknesses in order to keep high service quality.
- Various training options; optional training at head office, supplier training, branch manager training.

The organisation is also committed towards the ongoing training of front-line staff to make sure that they are knowledgeable and skilful enough to meet customer needs. This also helps to ease the pressures front-line staff face and lessens the pressure of the job. Therefore, branch managers are heavily involved in the training process. They are the key players in the continuous training within their branches. However, this may result in different training methodologies applied within branches. This is dependent on what (Taylor and Cosenza, 1997 and Yoo and Park, 2007) discuss about the training role in improving the performance and the benefits that the organisation gains by focusing on training their staff (See section 2.5.2.2). Optional training is always there for anyone who wishes to attend two hours sessions before going to work or even during the day. However, this is based at head office and gives unequal opportunities for front-line employees in located in other cities. The literature addresses the role of training in improving internal transactions between various departments (see Pfeffer, 1998) but, data from this study did not reveal this role. This may be due to the fact that front-line staff work in a highly independent way and the company considers that everyone in the organisation is doing his/her job efficiently and do not experience negativities. Everyone appears to be keen to do his/her work carefully and professionally as they know that may affect the work of others. This autonomy in work adds to employee satisfaction. A small numbers of employees refer to miscommunication that could happen with back office colleagues relating to very limited issues which do not have major effect on the front-line staff satisfaction or work. These are consistent with findings revealed by Sergeant and Frenkel (2000) as they found support departments do not affect the job satisfaction of front-line staff. This reflect the infrequency of involvment by other departments. It is rare that front-line staff are dependent on the direct assisstance of other departments.

The reward system

Financial aspects of internal marketing include incentives and financial rewards for good performance as well as employee discounts on purchases (Dabholkar and Abston, 2008). Hwang and Chi (2005) found that internal marketing generally contributes to job satisfaction; performance bonuses as part of that internal marketing are certainly expected to enhance employee satisfaction.

The commission system seems to be unique to the travel industry. From the findings, the commission structure is double edged. Although there is a pressure to work in a commission environment with a limited basic salary, it certainly incentivizes harder work and retaining satisfied customers. Commission links the effort you put into your work to provide the best possible customer service with the money you earn. This appears to result in more repeat business and referrals and increased profit. The profits benefit individuals as well the company. This environment reflects more than a philosophy within the organisation, "Work hard, and play hard" by differentiating the employees who contribute more effort in work. An allied value is that employees are partners, equals and contribute to achieving all business goals. Linking performance with reward is addressed in literature as a way of achieving customer satisfaction as an organisational outcome (Bansal et al, 2001; Arnett et al, 2002).

Rewards are all based on customer service. The rewards, especially the commission itself, motivate employees to present better customer service, retain and increase their client base. This means striving for a high volume of repeats and referrals. This reflects the culture of building long term relationships with customers. This outcome is consistent with the findings of Papasolomou and Vrontis' (2006) study that rewards motivate employees to deliver the brand's promise to external customers. Pfeffer (1998) also linked financial rewards with performance.

All other forms of reward (as shown in Section 6.3.4) reflect how the research case study organisation values their front-line staff. All social events are important to the company and are used to celebrate colleagues with excellent performance. Therefore, there is constant appreciation. Discounts on travel and trips for employees as part of their rewards also seems to satisfy staff within the organisation as an indicator of appreciation. Dabholkar and Abston's (2008) results confirm the role of internal

marketing as a tool for enhancing the competitive advantage gained through strategic consideration of the customer contact employee's role as the external customer. They also provide a link between employee patronage as part of the financial internal marketing and enhancing the customer contact employees' performance.

It seems from the above that rewards are primarily based on customer service which is facilitated by the client base. This reflects the culture of building long term relationships with customers. In addition, the philosophy of transparency is clear in the way rewards are conducted. All rewards are reported on the intranet. Front-line staff and their managers perceive rewards as logical and fair. All respondent, except for two employees who were struggling to achieve their targets, appreciate the reward system and are satisfied with it. The extent to which employees perceive performance as fair and valuable reflected in their satisfaction and consequently in their performance (Arnett et al, 2002).

Internal communication

Internal communication as an internal marketing motivational tool is widely acknowledged within the literature (see for instance, Rafiq and Ahmed, (1993); Piercy (1995); Cahill (1995); Ahmed and Rafiq (2003); Lings (2000; 2004).In Fun Travel, internal communication's main role is to hold the business and its parts together. The branches are spread over most UK cities and work independently of each other. Therefore, communication prevents branches from feeling isolated. The business news flows in a way that everyone can know what happens and how his/her role contributes to the business goals. Communication in Fun Travel is two way. It reflects an open-door policy of communication (Stauss and Hoffman, 2000) within Fun Travel. The company's intranet includes varied forms of communication such as e-mails, newsletters, sales tips, all business and products news from top down. It also includes chat fora and question options for employees to upload their questions and suggestions. Other forms of communication such as telephone conversation and meetings are also two ways. The employees' survey and suggestions to managers are considered bottom up communication (Kolfer, 1996 in Stauss and Hoffman, 2000).

Respondents see the flow of information as continuous and smooth. This again reflects the notion of a clan culture. The focus on transparency and an open and equal management style are evident from findings to support the internal communication (through intranet, telephone or personal meetings) and ease the flow of information. Open and continuous daily communication confirms all the values of equality and transparency and builds trust and security among employees. The literature on internal marketing confirms that one of the main roles of internal marketing is to improve interpersonal and interactive communication channels especially between management and employees [for example; Lings (2000); Tansuhaj (1988); Piercy (1995); Bitner et al (1994)]. This results in dynamics in the business that is clearly expressed within the findings. It also confirms Hurley's (1998) argument that good communication facilitates the acceptance of organisational direction and behaviour change. In addition, Stauss and Hoffman (2000) argue that the communication directed to employees (employee communication) can directly affect the knowledge, attitude and behavioural level of employees.

Schweitzer and Lyons (2008) propose that effective employment relationships are dependent on trust as an expectation on both the employer and employee sides of the relationship. For them the first step is to build trust through effective two-way communication. Communication that is honest, open, and timely can clarify objectives; align perspectives, and foster trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Internal communication messages retain all the organisational values. The transparency of the organisation is reflected within the content. All business strategies and targets are accessible to everyone. Through performance announcements, communication is used as way to constantly value and recognise employees.

The findings relating to internal communication show that there are specific messages for certain segments. For instance, there are daily morning "ten tips" for front-line staff to help them in their role. Any updates to contracts with suppliers or products are also sent to them. This is in line with Ahmed and Rafiq's (2003) conclusions that messages should be targeted to the right segment to carry meaning and not in a defuse manner. Other literature also supports the idea of dividing staff

into segments for effective communication (see section 2.5.3 and for example Piercy and Morgan (1991); Harrell and Fors (1992).

Findings show that miscommunication with back office can cause role conflict for the front-line employees. This idea of the negative effect of miscommunication between departments has been highlighted by Lukas and Maignan (1996) as well as Puth and Ewing (1998).

Fun Travel perhaps misses opportunities to use some communication tools such as video conferences. This method can help to overcome problems of training for employees based remotely from head office. It also saves the financial costs and time of travel. This is what Stauss and Hoffman (2000 p. 141) refer to when noting that traditional communication media sometimes cannot meet changing business requirements which are focused on quality, quantity, speed and targeting precision of information mediation. So there is always a need to evaluate new media.

Empowerment

The special nature of services, and in particular the simultaneous nature of production and consumption, is one of the major reasons that many service marketers argue that contact employees should be allowed a degree of discretion when dealing with customers [Rafiq and Ahmed (1998); Ugboro and Obeng (2000); Timmerman and Lytle (2007)].

In Section (2.5.4) consideration of the empowerment literature is presented. The meaning of the process, its consequences and how it affects and is affected by other organisational practices are explored. The freedom factor within Fun Travel is one of the main organisational features that is highlighted within the findings (see sections 6.3.6, 7.3.6, 8.3.5). This lies within organisational philosophy of ownership. It is also compatible with the overall culture of the organisation. This confirms the characteristics of empowerment discussed by Timmerman and Lytle (2007), the harmony that exists between empowerment and the overall culture of the organisation (Dunnes and Barnes, 2000), and the environment of empowerment with its broad job descriptions and open minded thinking (Morrison. 1996).

Both front-line staff and their managers confirmed that autonomy is one of the main advantages of work with Fun Travel. They gain experience and learning through

dealing with each customer's requirements and by solving their customers' problems as they arise. For them, dealing with customers is a real learning and training experience. According to Hennig-Thurau and Thurau (2004), empowering people contributes to increased skills and knowledge on the side of the employee. If the employee can act on his or her own in order to best serve the customer, then he or she will often pick up new insights regarding customer expectations and behaviour, and thereby extend his or her customer-oriented skills (i.e. "learning by doing"). Rafiq and Ahmed (1998) distinguished between two types of discretion as the main features of empowerment (Bowen and Lawler, 1992), routine and creative discretion. This appears to be the case in the case of Fun Travel. Branch managers or, as they are called, team leaders are completely free in the way they manage their branches to achieve their targets. Front-line staff also have autonomy in dealing with customers and arranging their work (i.e. creative discretion), however monetary compensation is available within a specified option menu from which they have to choose from. Otherwise, they have to consult higher managerial levels. So this part can be considered as a routine discretion. This helps to avoid what Bowen and Lawler (1992) considers as the downside of empowerment that front-line staff give too much away to customers to recover from service failures.

Within the findings, it is clear that the freedom factor is unrestrained concerning the freedom of the staff to deal with their own customers. However, it operates within a certain framework especially when it comes to monetary compensation to be paid. This confirms what Lewis (1989) and Timmerman and Lytle (2007) refer to as the organisational policies that guide employees while they are working within an autonomous environment.

However within the findings, some variation within the degree of autonomy between branches is evident especially when it comes to monetary compensation that may be paid to customers. This degree of variation is due to the different perspectives and personalities of managers and staff. Marketing manager confirms the idea of the freedom within the company which leads to variation of the way of doing the business across branches. There is a new trend to revisit the way the business at the front-line works and produce a framework for "the one best way". This seems contradicting the autonomy culture of the company.

Rafiq and Ahmed (1998) highlight that empowerment starts with recruiting employees with the right characteristics and training them well in order to cope with the range of tasks that they will have while working independently. Within the findings, it is evident that the degree of power given to employees reflects the extent to which the organisation trusts the level of front-line qualification and preparation and their capability of being autonomous in dealing with their customers. Empowering front-line staff seems to have positive consequences within Fun Travel, such as satisfying employees, encouraging them towards better performance as they feel they are running their own small business (details in section 9.4 relating to internal aspects of the organisation).

The findings here challenge Bowen and Lawler's (1992) argument that empowering front-line staff can lead to slow service delivery through the individualization of service to customers. The findings show that developing front-line staff, training them in multi-tasking and team working as well selling the minimum standards of service within the organisation help them to present the possible best service overtime. For example, if they inform the customer that they will be back to him/her within 24 hours, they know that they will return the call or the e- mail within a shorter time span. However, they give them plenty of time. Therefore, it could be argued that empowering front-line staff does not affect the service standard. Finally, looking at all internal marketing practices throughout the findings, it is clear that the branch managers (team leaders) are heavily involved in the implementation of those practices starting with recruitment and including empowering staff and motivating them. In addition to their role in implementing all human resource practices which are implemented through line managers, they play a main role in motivation as well as supporting and creating a positive friendly environment for their staff. This confirms findings that front-line managers' roles in people management and in management more generally, have been broadened while maintaining their traditional supervisory duties (Hales, 2005).

In addition, Purcell and Hutchinson (2007 p.5) state that while some human resource policies may impact on employees directly, most rely on line manager action or support, The quality of the relationship between employees and their immediate line

managers is liable, too, to influence perceptions not only of human resources practices but of work climate, either positively or negatively. The findings of the Fun Travel case story support this idea as one of the main dimensions of culture within the organisation depends on "leading by example" (see Section7.2.3.1) so branch mangers present a role model to the front-line staff. Jaussi and Dionne's (2003) research explores the role of front-line managers' behaviour in affecting positively the performance of their followers. They argue that when individuals see a behaviour demonstrated, they learn through emulation. They also refer to research in this area that links the role model of front-line mangers with increased safety knowledge, physical fitness, teaching ability and career advancement. Wieseke et al's (2011) results confirm the role of the front-line managers in motivating front-line staff.

9.3 Internal marketing and the external aspects of the organisation

As shown in the preceding section, the practice of internal marketing within the culture of the organisation helps to develop both a customer and employee focus. The customer focus enables the organisation to find ways of effectively delivering high-quality customer service as a means of maintaining its corporate brand. This helps to confirm that these practices represent internal marketing. Gounaris (2008) argues that although an agreement about the operational meaning of internal marketing has not yet developed, what both managers and scholars have to keep in mind is that all these actions take place within a specific framework that is customer driven and focused, which in turn explains why internal marketing is different from human resource management. Mudie (2003) stresses the same idea that by stating that unless the practice of internal marketing takes place with the company's external customer in mind it is likely to be nothing more than standard human resource management practice.

The findings here reveal that front-line staff are crucial elements in serving customers. They present the primary source of information on customers' needs. Presenting high quality customer service depends on complementary procedures; findings out the real needs of customers, searching the best information that might help them "go the extra mile" to obtain the best options for customers, following up with them throughout their itinerary to make sure that they received the service as promised, and finally, welcoming them back to keep a friendly relationship and obtain feedback. The key philosophy is to build up rapport with customers. Findings reveal that relationship building needs trust to be built by keeping promises, showing care equally for each individual customer, and adapting to the customer's personality and motivation. Building that long-term relationship with customers is considered a vital base of Fun Travel business as on average and according to the findings 70% of their business depends on repeats and referrals. The first factor that helps employees to build this relationship is the recruitment of socialable front-line staff that can interact. In other words the personality of front-line staff is the first step towards developing an orientation towards customers. Research findings suggest that customer orientation starts at the individual level and certain personality traits make

it easier for the employee to focus on customer's needs and be responsive to these needs (Brown et al, 2002). An internal marketing programme thus aims to understand what such employees value and try to become responsive to their needs in order to increase the company's attractiveness as a potential a employer to the specific segment of future employees who share such personality characteristics as openness and extroversion. This is how the circle of internal marketing based human resources within internal marketing works. Increasing the attractiveness of the company as an employer is a human resource task. However, ensuring the type of employees the organisation wants to attract to fit within its culture and to achieve business goals is internal marketing practice. Another factor that facilitates communication between front-line staff and customers, especially in the telephone-based branches where there is no face to face interaction, is the shared interest through travel enthusiasm, showing care and listening very carefully to understand customer needs. Gremler and Gwinner (2008) point out that the four rapport building behaviours are; attentive behaviour through emphatic listening and attentiveness to others communication, imitative behaviour ,this is simply as the idea of gauging customers needs which is described in the Fun Travel case, courteous behaviour , this is caring about customers through being polite, showing concern, remember customer's name, and common grounding behaviour talking about common experiences which is travel and tours in the Fun Travel case.

Linking customer service with the reward system motivates employees to "go the extra mile" for their customers. This links the organisation's goals with the employees' benefits. This confirms Parasuraman (1987) argument that customer orientation should be liked to rewards for employees. The customer-oriented culture which is reflected in such behaviour towards the customer seems to be deeper embedded in the organisational culture as it appears in the language and stories of the staff and their managers about their customers (see Sections6.2.2, 7.2.2). This confirms Homburg and Pflesser's (2000) findings that artefacts are an important part of a customer-orientation culture and not only behaviour. In addition, this emphasizes the importance of not concentrating on quantitative measures of behaviour and listening to employees' and managers' perspectives and stories (Harris

and Ogbonna, 1999). Appendix (c) presents examples of how the informants describe their customers and various situations of interaction with customers.

All of this is mirrored in customer satisfaction which is evident to the organisation through three main indicators:

- The high percentage of repeats and referrals;
- Monthly achieved profit;
- Positive feedbacks gathered through personal relationships with customers.

There is also in place procedures to monitor the level of customer satisfaction such as call recordings, online focus groups with customers, random telephone surveys as well as random conversations with customers around shops conducted by area leaders. Linking customer orientation positively to performance of the organisation and to customers satisfaction is confirmed by other several studies (see section   and for example Darby et al (1997); Brady and Cronin Jr. (2001); Bellou (2007).

9.4 Internal marketing and internal aspects of the organisation

This section addresses employees' satisfaction from the employees' and managers' viewpoint as one of the consequence of internal marketing practices. As can be seen in (Section 6.5) reasons for satisfaction from the employees' perspective relates to three main factors their role with the customers and the work environment within the company and its' managerial practices. Concerning customers, feedback from satisfied customers and rapport building with customers are considered to be important factors to satisfy employees in their role.

This relates to the level of customer orientation culture of the customer-contact employees (see Sections 6.2.2, 7.2.2). As shown in (Sections 4.3,4.4) there is a relationship between customer orientation and employee satisfaction and finally customer satisfaction. This concurs with Burnthorne et al's (2005) results that the degree of job satisfaction relates to the sales person's customer orientation and, finally to customer satisfaction. Donavan et al (2004) also show that customer orientation influences job satisfaction positively and leads to wider organisational citizenship behaviour. An example of such behaviours appears within the value of "going out our way for you" which involve an extra effort, beyond front-line employees' job description, in order to satisfy and retain customers.

Findings show that, for employees building rapport with customers is a pleasant part of the job for front-line staff. This confirms what Brown et al (2002) propose as the enjoyment dimension of customer orientation of customer-contact employees. Results show that respondents enjoy the relationship and consider it as a means to gain customer trust, identify any problems and solve them as soon as possible, gaining feedback on customer satisfaction and finally securing a client base for future business.

Relationship building is a vital part of the role of customer-contact employees (Baum, 2006). As noted by Gremler and Gwinner (2000) this rapport building has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and can also affect customer loyalty and create positive word of mouth benefits. Other studies link employees' level of customer orientation and the willingness and ability of employees to build rapport with their customers (Franke and Park, 2006; Susskind, 2003) and this is linked to employee performance as perceived by customers (Liaw et al, 2010). Thus the study

251

results confirm these findings and show that building rapport with customers affects employee satisfaction with their role.

Customers themselves seem to be a key reason for dissatisfaction as well. Customer-contact staff, who experience a rude attitude from customers who may never be satisfied by any service and who ask for unreasonable things, describe that as the worst part of the job. This confirms what Bitner et al (1994) report in their study about customers as a possible source of employee dissatisfaction.

The customer orientation culture seems to start within the recruitment process where the company tends to hire employees with sociable personalities and who have had customer service experience or at least demonstrate capabilities in this discretion. This is in line with Czaplewski et al (2001) who argue that organisations should hire for attitude then train for specific skills as people's core attitudes cannot be changed. In addition, training sessions can be used to develop these values such as thinking of customers as top priority, understanding their needs and delivering on them (see Section 2.5.2.1). Many sources stress the importance of recruitment and training as important practices for developing and preserving organisational culture (Rogers et al, 1994; Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Donavan et al, 2004).

Concerning the work environment, employees report that they appreciate the type of the values that the company shares through its managerial practices. These values seem to be supported by internal marketing practices. For instance, training, rewards and internal communications and empowerment all seem to play an important role in developing employees, valuing them as well as supporting values of transparency, support partnership and equality in the work environment. Employee respondents are very satisfied because of continuous career development as well as career progression that they can achieve within the organisation or even within the industry due to the high standard of training they received. Rewards are another source of their satisfaction; they feel that their efforts are valued by the organisation. Transparency, openness and socialization though internal communications gives employees feelings of trust, security and satisfaction. The power they are given to arrange their work and deal with their own clients as if they are partner in the business increases the level of satisfaction. They can participate in the business with ideas, objections and share in decision making.

This supports the studies that link to internal marketing practices to employee satisfaction (Ahmed et al, 2003; Boshoff and Allen, 2000; Dabholkar and Abston, 2008).

Branch managers appear to play a key role with their staff in creating the family type of work environment and emphasizing company values. The relationship between front-line teams and their managers is reported to be open and supportive. This type of relationship is appreciated by employees and affects their feelings of satisfaction. This finding is in line with the results of Church (1995) and Sergeant and Frenkel (2000) concerning the link between supportive managers and employees' level of satisfaction.

According to the literature and as discussed in Section (4.5), a transformational type of management is one that based on closer relationships between managers and their staff. This relationship is based on trust, commitment and helps managers to enable staff to recognize the importance of their role in achieving the organisation's goal. This type of management appears to be effective in the study case and has a positive effect on employees' level of satisfaction and also supports Bennett's (2009) findings.

The type of management in the Fun Travel case is based on what the literature addresses as outcome control; employees are flexible in achieving their targets, work independently and are rewarded according to their outcomes. This type of management is evident in the way that it does not create close relationship between front-line staff and their managers (Onyemah et al, 2010). The case of Fun Travel contradicts Onyemah et al's (2010) arguments, because Fun Travel's managers do have success in creating closer relationship with their staff, despite the autonomous nature of work. This results in higher job satisfaction, better customer service and more organisational commitment to business goals. This closer relationship with the form of continuous communication seems to create a positive work environment that satisfies employees and their performance (Kim, 2002; Den Hartog and Verburg, 2002). Although there is a close and constant relationship between managers and their staff, front-line staff are given a wide degree of autonomy to arrange their work and achieve their results. This is one of main aspects of their satisfaction.

Top managers consider turnover as an indicator of employee satisfaction. Overall, turnover is average but the nature of travel industry with generally high turnover rates should be taken into consideration. Turnover and satisfaction are linked together within the literature in a reverse relationship (see for example, Rust et al, 1996; Schweitzer and Lyons, 2008). Employee satisfaction and performance are linked positively in some studies (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Malhotra and Mukherjee, 2004; Chi and Gursoy, 2009). The first two of these studies finds direct relationships between the two, while the latter study indicates that the relationship is mediated by customer satisfaction. The findings from Fun Travel case support the positive relationship. The high percentage of repeat and referral customers is considered as a sign of the good customer service that is provided by front-line staff and leads to customer satisfaction and this mediates the link between employees' satisfaction and organisational performance.

9.5 Internal marketing between the human resource management and marketing boundaries

Hales (1994) presents the view that the management process is holistic with interdependence between all departments. As Fun Travel's findings demonstrate, there is complete integration between departments. There is an open door culture not only between employees and management but also between departments. As described by one of the top managers "it is a relaxed, casual but professional environment". Departmental integration is clear through the idea of the "SWOT" team (see Section8.2.3). Through bringing together heads of the departments, business performance is reviewed and then the future business goals are set. This happens through open discussion from all parties. Therefore, everyone's vision is represented. In other words, decisions recognise the vision and goals of all departments. Each department then implements its role in helping to achieve the business goals within open internal communications between the whole organisation. This again represents a clan culture. This can answer the questions that Cahill (1995) raises about the vision of the management and which vision is to govern in internal marketing (see section 2.3). Marketing the business effectively is the aim of all parties in seeking to achieve business goals (customers' satisfaction which leads to profit). So, it could be argued that everything is implemented with a marketing focus. In other words the organisation studies the desirable goals and then identifies the ways to achieve them. The desired goal of internal marketing can be clearly recognized as a marketing function, especially in terms of the view that marketing is primarily about customer satisfaction. On the basis of this view, the most qualified and skilful experts to assess the market's needs, design initiatives and execute them are the marketing team. However, a marketing programme needs involvement and input from marketing experts. In the case of internal marketing these experts of the "internal market" are the human resource managers (Dunne and Barnes, 2000). In other words, the fields of organisational behaviour and human resource management can help to find the best ways to achieve these goals (Bansal et al, 2001).

Top managers as well as branch managers highlight the importance of marketing the business and the organisation to new staff. In this case they think of their staff as customers who they have to encourage into the business.

Human resources managers warn about the idea of taking employees for granted In that sense they think of them as customers and seek various means to motivate them and enhance their work environment. Top managers believe that happy customers are the key to successful businesses. The idea of considering employees as customers returns us to the debate on what internal marketing means (see Section 2.2.1).

As shown in the previous sections of this discussion, internal marketing practices are concerned with the qualification and motivation of employees. It is shown that this is directed towards employees; however customer needs are in mind and are the ultimate goal. In other words, internal marketing practices are implemented by human resources with desired business outcomes in mind, i.e. customer satisfaction and profit.

This confirms Gounaris (2008) argument that what distinguishes internal marketing from traditional human resources is that internal marketing aims at satisfying customers through employee satisfaction. At the same time this contradicts what Dunne and Barnes (2000) argue which is that that the end goal of internal marketing is satisfying employees.

All the above contributes to our understanding that the practice of internal within human resources is modifying the role of human resources and its implementation to respond to business goals This is in line with literature discussion of the integration between marketing and human resources for internal marketing implementation (see for example Pitt et (1999); Rafiq and Ahmed (1993);Joseph (1996); Mudie (2003); Som (2003)).What is described as a structured integration between marketing and human resources is verified within Fun Travel but it is different from Glassman and McAfee's (1992) argument that there have to be representatives from each departmement with others. They also argued that the marketing department can include personnel people responsible for hiring, training, compensating employees who are involved in marketing activities. Findings here reveal that all top managers started within the organisation as front-line staff. Thus, every one of them understands the nature of this work in all circumstances. Human resources managers, for example, understand the marketing role that front-line staff play. Front-line staff market the organisation, the products and above all, they market themselves through their knowledge and personalities.

To sum up and in line with Lewis (1989), human resources personnel within internal marketing introduce proactive employees to the organisational culture by recruiting and training these employees with a customer needs perspective in mind.

In addition the message is carried that employees are trusted and valued through an open management style, with a flow of information and participative decision making and more autonomy in job responsibilities (Hales and Mecrate-Butcher, 1994).